Schooled: or, Avoir le Coup de Foudre

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Schooled: or, Avoir le Coup de Foudre

by DBMars

Summary

Hannibal Lecter is, of course, the top student at his elite Paris boarding school. But then, an American boy named Will Graham arrives, his tuition paid on scholarship, and disrupts everything in Hannibal's world.

Notes

This was written for Bottom Hannibal Fest 2023.

Prompt from @puta_sucia_time: "College enemies competing for valedictorian. Hannibal cause he thinks he's the smartest. Will because fuck Hannibal."

Experience Keeps a Dear School

Chapter 1: Experience Keeps a Dear School

"Well, that patient's particular issue can be linked back to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences." Ah, Frederick. Such a valiant effort, as usual, a courageous leap into being so very, very wrong that one cannot help but appreciate his moxy. It calls to mind the human interest in tales of men and women sealing themselves in barrels to plunge over Niagara Falls. How can a person not stand and watch a train collision as it occurs?

I raise my hand and wait to be called on, delighting already in the disappointment evident in Professor Du Maurier's face. It is mirrored perfectly in the coldly beautiful features of his daughter, Bedelia, who sits beside me in the lecture hall. Once again, I'm going to eviscerate Frederick Chilton's faulty theories from groin to neck.

But just as Professor du Maurier lifts his hand to gesture at me, a voice rings out, strong and clear, suffering its American accent. "Multiple intelligence theory is a *neuromyth* . There's no neurological research that supports it, ah… in *any* way, shape, or form."

The entire class turns to look at the boy who has spoken out of turn. We all know him, and this is not the first time I've heard him interrupt class like this. His name is Will Graham, and it's his first year at Archambault Academy. He is universally disliked with active rancor or ignored completely for several reasons: his lack of breeding, manners, the fact that he is here on a full scholarship. Being American is bad enough – Frederick is American and still trying to live it down – but Will Graham's French is a quarter Quebec, the rest Louisiana patois and bad grammar. And, as should be obvious from this display, he is *rude* .

Frederick turns in his seat, glaring up at Will where he slouches in the back of the lecture theater. "That's only because educators around the world have misinterpreted multiple intelligence theory, trying to translate it into instructional pedagogy when it has no business being there. Gardner made it clear that his theory is pure psychology and there is no neurological basis."

"So, he, ah… *didn't* say in 2011 that MI theory is 'psychological because it is a theory of the mind, biological because it privileges information about the brain, the nervous system, and ultimately the human genome'?" Will challenges.

"What's your source?" Chilton barks back.

"His own damn book. *Frames of Mind.* It's on page 7, if you're curious." Will Graham leans back in his seat, putting a sneakered foot up on the chair in front of him, crossing his arms. " *Si bon* ." I expect him to look smug, but he just looks annoyed, tired of Frederick wasting everyone's time. I have to say I agree with the sentiment, but I find his behavior beyond abrasive. The worst part about it is that he's entirely correct, and his comment is *exactly* what I was going to say.

This isn't the first time this has happened. Will Graham has to know his behavior is antisocial and arrogant. He was polite enough when the term started, but once it became clear that his heritage, language, and financial status ensured he would never be accepted, he's been nothing but a nuisance.

"Correct, Mr. Graham, as usual." Professor Du Maurier's frosty blue eyes narrow despite his compliment. "And delivered, as usual, without a shred of grace."

Muffled laughter from the rest of the class. Will taps his pencil against his temple and makes a note in his notebook before staring back at the professor expectantly, as if to say, *you may continue now.*

After class, the students hurry out. Surely now the mid-term grades have been posted – it's Archambault tradition to rank students by GPA and make the scores public the Monday after midterms and then again after final exams. For some reason, the listings weren't on the board outside the administrative office after breakfast. I heard a rumor about double checking the calculations.

Bedelia links arms with me as we cross the academy's lush green lawn, following the 16th century cobblestone path back towards the administration offices. She does this to make sure the other students know we are romantically entangled, and also because her high heeled shoes are remarkably unsuitable for these ancient paving stones.

The lists must be posted. A sea of navy blue blazers stitched with the school's coat of arms in vivid gold thread gather around the bulletin board, vying for a chance to read the small print on the posted list.

Like the Red Sea for Moses, the crowd parts for Bedelia and I. We approach and I look to confirm what I already know – that I have the highest grade average in the entire academy, a perfect score despite professors' disdain for giving them.

No.

I am *second* on the list.

I hear Bedelia's sharp intake of breath at my side. All other sounds in the world are muffled, underwater, and I feel my normally tranquil heartbeat thunder to a gallop in my chest.

Will Graham is first on the list.

Although we have the exact same perfect scores. We are tied for first place. But his last name comes first alphabetically.

My mouth goes hard and cold and I rub my thumb against my forefinger with enough force that the skin makes a rasping noise against itself.

"Hannibal?" Bedelia says softly from my side.

"Yes?" I ask, calm and pleasant, though every single pair of eyes in the crowd is on me, studying my reaction as I absorb the news.

“Seems like you have your work cut out for you between now and final exams.” It’s Frederick Chilton’s abominable New England accent. He strolls up with his hands in his uniform trouser pockets, a benevolent, understanding smile on his face.

I would like to unzip him with a knife and pull out his intestines for him to see.

Instead, I turn to Bedelia. “Lunch off campus?” I suggest.

“I’m having lunch with my father,” she says. “I’ll see you later, after Renaissance Pastoral Poetry.” Slipping up on tiptoe, she presses a kiss against the air next to my cheekbone and turns away.

I ignore Frederick’s smug smile and shoulder my satchel as if nothing is wrong, striking out across the lawn again. And there he is. Will Graham, sitting beneath an ancient, gnarled tree, stretched on the grass like a transient, reading a book and eating an apple. The October breeze is chilly, and he has a scarf around his neck. The wind lifts his dark curls away from it, sliding them across his forehead. He shoves them impatiently behind his ear, but they won’t cooperate.

His eyes are blue, but the warm blue of the Mediterranean, the ocean off of the coast of the French Riviera, the way it looks on a clear day from the top of the perched village of Eze. His skin is pale and remarkably clear for a boy our age - he is 18, and I’m two years his senior. The proportions of his face are sublime, androgynous, his gender unnecessary, his mouth petal-pink, the upper lip a cupid’s bow that has struck me full of more arrows than Saint Sebastian suffered.

Acknowledging these details of his appearance destabilizes me more than seeing his name above mine on the list. He garners my further contempt because I find him so irresistibly beautiful. Looking at him for too long makes me feel like my skin is cracking off, a porcelain shell slowly disintegrating, revealing whatever is beneath. What I’ve taken such care to hide. I wish I didn’t consider him attractive or intriguing. I wish I didn’t consider him at all, that I could choose to ignore him the way everyone else does.

Before I can stop myself, I approach, keeping my posture as casual as possible. My long shadow falls across him and he looks up, squinting. I’ve purposely stood with my back to the sun so he has to look into the light, reducing me to what I hope is a threatening silhouette. “Congratulations,” I say, the word coated in hoarfrost.

He looks back down at his book and finishes reading the page before acknowledging me. “For what?” He gets to his feet, shoving his book in his bag. He can sense trouble, I have no doubt.

“You haven’t seen the rankings yet, I assume.”

“What rankings?’

“Midterm grade point averages.” It is impossible for me not to notice the way his neck curves as he tosses his hair. I can’t imagine he has much of anything to shave, which would explain

why I don't smell any kind of cologne or lotion on his skin. Just the faintest hint of cheap soap and his own natural scent – clean boy and toothpaste.

"Yeah? And?"

I should walk away right now to emphasize how ridiculous he is, but instead, I hear myself say, "You and I are tied for the highest average."

He looks at me steadily, shouldering his ragged backpack that appears to be of US military issue. Students have said he avoids eye contact like he might catch some sort of psychic plague. I wish he'd look away so I could hold on to my vow to destroy him. But that would be acknowledging my higher status and he won't give me the satisfaction. As it is, he's captured me and I feel my resolve slipping. His lashes are thick and graceful and I can't help but consider the aesthetics of his nose.

"Huh," is all the response I get. His pupils expand for a moment and it gives me an unexplainable, otherworldly sensation. I feel exposed. "That… *needles* you, doesn't it?"

"I welcome competition."

"That's funny, because I reckon you've never really had it before." Why does he insist on being this way? It certainly won't endear him to anyone here at Archambault. "And you don't know what to do with it."

I say nothing because it's true. But I am proud that my face betrays nothing. He's an observant creature, but needs a *significant* housebreaking.

"I suppose I'll have to dial back my social life and focus on my studies." I say this purposely to point out that he doesn't have any friends.

"Such a sacrifice."

"And how would you know, exactly?" I reply.

His brow is storm clouds now. "Fuck you, Lecter," he growls, shoving his hands in his pockets and turning away, marching off toward the library.

Fools Will Learn In No Other

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal suffers wanting to destroy Will Graham and simultaneously having the most hugest crush.

Chapter 2: Fools Will Learn In No Other

While I said what I said to Will Graham to shame him, it turns into a prophecy. I neglect Bedelia and our circle of friends to read and work, burning off the excess stress by swimming laps and playing the harpsichord. Again and again I consider ways I could kill Will Graham and get away with it. But when I imagine how I would do it, it always begins with a blade and ends with my hands around his neck. And then I release him, caress that long ivory throat and kiss the bruises I made.

I curse myself after these visions overtake me; they make my cock ache in a way Bedelia cannot alleviate. I'm fully aware that at this age my hormonal changes are causing an overproduction of testosterone. And yet I'm powerless against it, fraught with want. The harder I study, the worse it gets. I touch myself several times a day to try and release the pressure but whenever I close my eyes I see *him* , imagine his hand giving me this pleasure.

I understand and accept that I am going mad when I begin to imagine Bedelia's mouth as his.

The boarding school empties on Thursday afternoon for a long weekend. It's near the American holiday of Thanksgiving, and I pray he'll fly home and put an ocean between us so I can regain enough sanity to write a paper. I won't be going home because I haven't one. Robertus has been dead for two years now, and Murasaki made it clear when she discovered what I was — and what I was capable of — that I am not to return home. At Christmas, she will come to Paris to visit me and stay on the Champs Elysees with Chiyoh.

But Will Graham doesn't go anywhere. We're the only two students on campus, and the housemistress of the girls' dormitory is the only staff on site. We're supposed to our eat meals with her, but we haven't been. She leaves food in the staff kitchen and we eat when we feel the need. It irks me that he cleans up so well after himself; that means he has manners, and simply chooses not to use them on me or his fellow students. Yet for old Madame Delecroix, the kitchen is spotless.

Inevitably, I run across him in the library on a gray, rainy evening. He's standing on a wobbly stool, trying to reach the very top shelf of the dead languages section. The sound of my footfall startles him and he clutches the old shelf for balance, then curses, shaking his hand.

I see drops of blood against the dim reference section lighting.

He steps down from the stool, holding one hand in the other and examining the palm. Just beneath his thumb is a freely-bleeding gash made by an errant nail. He lifts his hand to elevate it and applies pressure at the wrist. Interesting. He responds efficiently to bodily trauma.

My mind cycles through several cutting remarks about his clumsiness but my mouth simply refuses to form them. I approach and he eyes me warily, waiting for something inventively nasty to be said in a mild, mannerly tone, my signature. Instead, I hold out my hand. “Let me see.”

Will narrows his jewel-like eyes, and his lower lip protrudes defiantly. I can smell his blood and it’s a miracle I don’t draw the wound to my mouth to lick it. I want him inside of me. I want something of his that was, until just moments ago, in the chambers of his heart. This eclipses my other instinct, which is to cut open his head and eat his brains, a symbol of consuming and conquering his intellect.

I refuse to back down or lower my offered hand. And after several long moments, he extends his arm and rests the back of his hand in my palm, letting me examine the wound. I withdraw the gold pocket square from my academy jacket and dab at the blood. This seems to shock him. I know that each uniform only comes with one pocket square, but of course I have several of the same design and staining one means nothing to me.

Or perhaps his deep surprise comes from the offered gesture of comfort.

“We should go to the infirmary,” I say, pressing the pocket square against his hand so he can hold it there himself. “Have you had a tetanus shot?”

“Had to get one to come over here,” Will says, grimacing as he uses his opposite fingers to apply pressure. “Is Nurse Blanc even here?”

“We don’t need Nurse Blanc,” I say.

Again, his eyes narrow in distrust, and his lower lip gives the slightest tremble, jutting out again.

“If you die of an infection or blood poisoning, I won’t have the satisfaction of beating your grade point at the end of the term,” I say coolly, despite my chest giving way to palpitations. His hair is wild, but looks so glossy and soft. I wonder if I might die of want for him, an insane notion I can’t ignore.

I take him to the infirmary in the administration building and make him sit on the cot while I look for supplies. I clean the wound and dress it carefully and he’s very brave about the sting of the antiseptic.

“Thanks.” I expect the single syllable to be begrudging, that he despises being in my debt. But it’s said tenderly, and the simple touch of my hands makes him go soft, the flint in his eyes dissolving, the lip receding. Then, “Why are you still here? Everyone else went home.”

“My aunt will come and visit me in Paris at Christmas,” I say as he flexes his hand, testing the bandage. “And you?”

He scoffs. “Like my dad could afford the extra flight. The school paid for airfare to get here. I won’t be able to go home until I graduate. But you’re a smart guy, Lecter, you probably knew that.”

“I could have surmised it, yes.”

“Everybody here knows I got a full ride and that I’m trash.” He smiles and it’s brutal to behold. Then, “Why do you live with your aunt?”

Again, no manners. But this time, it feels like unadorned honesty, not rudeness for its own sake.

“My parents are dead,” I say. “And so is my sister.”

He swallows hard enough that I see his throat work. It’s like the sadness that bubbles up through the cracks of my mind at the mention of my family is bleeding into him. His empathy is astounding.

He looks away, cradling his hand against his thigh. I watch the curls tumble forward on his forehead as he bends his neck to bow his head. Contrite. “I’m, ah… that’s, uhm…” He shakes his head. “You’ve heard it all before, but, uhm, I hope you know what I mean.”

“Thank you,” is my half-whispered response as I think of Mischa’s final moments.

He puts a hand lightly on my forearm, a show of support. It’s brief, with a tiny squeeze, and he lets go.

But he’s breached the barrier again and I realize the battle is lost. Like I’m being puppeteered, my hand lifts to his face. I brush his hair behind his ear and comb my fingers down the back of his neck. His curls are as soft as they look, and his skin is even softer.

His lips fall open in surprise and I draw him in by the back of his head for an utterly desperate kiss. Gripped by a sudden terror, I let him go entirely and drop my hand to my knee, waiting to see what he does. It is the longest moment of my life.

“What was that for?” he demands crossly, but I can see the bloom of peony pink on his cheeks and the color that rushes to his lips, the way he shifts against his physical response.

I look at him, my expression fixed in soft repose. I do not speak. I couldn’t hear myself over the thudding muscle in my chest even if I could make a sound.

And then he kisses *me* . It is as though he has unleashed himself, broken free of chains. His bandaged hand on my cheek, the other gripping the lapel of my academy blazer. It is not chaste. It is greedy and feral and the most delicious thing I’ve ever tasted. I give in to my fantasies, kissing him, tasting his tongue, penetrating his mouth with mine, stroking and pulling his hair. He’s inexperienced and untamed and starved for touch and gradually I bring

him under my power. He may yet ruin my chances of being the top of our class, but I know I'm a good lover and I plan to show him my skill.

"Hannibal," he whispers.

He Is Best Who Is Trained In the Severest School

Chapter Summary

Enemies become lovers...

Chapter 3: He Is Best Who Is Trained In the Severest School

We begin by tussling for dominance. He slings a leg over my lap and forces me against the wall behind the cot, arms around my neck, kissing and biting in tandem, pulling my hair and breaking off the buttons at my shirt collar. Despite his ardor I catch him with honey, stroking his curls with worshipful fingers, caressing him through his shirt, thumbing his nipple through the fabric before easing my hand between his legs where he straddles me. Eventually he melts against me, his breathing intense but deeply meditative instead of panting like an animal.

And then I find his neck.

When I kiss the long slope of unblemished skin a delightful shudder passes through him as his petal lips part and his eyes drift closed. Ah. Fascinating. I turn my attention here, kissing, pressing the skin gently between my teeth. He's mine now and even as we wiggle out of our clothes one piece at a time I visit his throat again and again between burning kisses. The sound he makes when I close my lips against his neck and suck as hard as I can is more precious than Bach, more brilliant than Mozart.

He lets me push him back on the cot and peel off his uniform slacks and boxers, seems to welcome it when I hold his wrists against the awful vinyl surface and rut us together. If I sense for a second like he's tensing to try and get out from under me, I kiss his neck again, lick from the hollow of his clavicle up under his chin, suck his bottom lip before edging it between my teeth. And he submits.

He could spill any second. But I don't want it like this. I think of how I wanted his blood, how I wanted him enveloped, trapped within me, confined to my body. There is a tub of rudimentary petroleum jelly next to a box of cotton swabs on the counter and I grab it, popping open the top. It's crude, but will serve its purpose. He stares at me in deep wonder as I rub some around and in the pucker of my anus and then cries out when I cover his pink, swollen shaft with more. Will's warm-water eyes are wide with adoring disbelief as I work myself onto him, sinking down quickly. It hurts. It's been a long time, since before Bedelia, that I've done this, but I don't care. I stretch, readjust, and tense my legs to ride him, locking my hands around his wrists again and pressing them against the cot.

He did vow to fuck me, after all. Of course he doesn't fight it, especially when I nuzzle his throat again and kiss the mark I left behind. Now his sounds are meekly begging and he

tosses his head back, curls spilling licentiously out behind him. He's trapped. I've caught him and I own him entirely in this moment. If I demanded he confess his love for me or admit that he wants to be loved, he would say the words. If I degraded him, told him he was a slut and all the education in the world wouldn't make him into anything but a laborer's son, he'd agree with me.

But as he moans and writhes beneath me, tilting his hips to fuck up into me, slave to the warm tight place where I cradle him, I realize the reverse is just as true. He looks at me now with hooded eyes, so softly trusting now, still glistening with a kind of dreamy disbelief. In a sweeping moment I'm terrified of such an overt vulnerability. At least now, I reason, the power is shared. We are conjoined.

This is illustrated by the hand he gets free of my grip and wraps around my cock, stroking it even as I ride him. And he stubbornly doesn't climax until I do, soaking his chest with long pearly streams. I lean in even as the tremors still grip my muscles, and swipe my two longest fingers through my emission and tease them against his mouth. He opens readily and sucks and then spills inside me.

My thighs are burning. I slip him out of me and sink onto the cold linoleum floor of the infirmary next to the cot. He rolls off and lowers himself on top of me, smearing us both with what I left behind, resting his cheek on my clavicle, head tucked up under my chin. I hold him tightly against me, stroking his hair, feeling the rise and fall of his chest against mine as we breathe in tandem.

"This doesn't mean I'm gonna go easy on you," Will murmurs softly against my shoulder.

I chuckle. "Likewise. May the best man win."

Time is the School in Which We Learn, Time is the Fire in Which We Burn.

Chapter Summary

Who's going to be on top?

I mean of the GPA list, you pervert.

Okay and the other one, too.

Chapter 4: Time is the School in Which We Learn, Time is the Fire in Which We Burn.

We spend the rest of the holiday trying to distract one another from studying and writing papers by engaging in coitus as often as possible. He sucks my cock in the library so I'm unable to concentrate. I suck his so I can steal his copy of a book I need. And we eat every meal together. As soon as Bedelia returns to campus I end our relationship with little fanfare. She hates me, but she hates Will more.

At the end of the term, after final exams, the grades are posted again. Will and I saunter up to the board, my arm draped around his shoulders, his circling my waist. We've tied for first place a second time, but, again, he's listed before me alphabetically. "Huh," Will says, grinning up at me. "Looks like I'm on top again."

"Not tonight you won't be," I threaten him before kissing him hard enough to leave him breathless.

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